

The Relationship Between Depression, Anxiety and Stress with Work-Life Balance among Military Personnel

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Abstract

The blurring of boundaries between one's professional and personal lives makes it difficult to find a balance in military life. Hence, the purpose of the study was to determine whether there is a connection between work-life balance and mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables can be found using Pearson's Correlation. The research includes 293 individuals from Army Headquarters. The relationship between work-life balance and mental health symptoms including anxiety, stress, and depression was examined using two instruments: the DASS-21 and a work-life balance questionnaire. Military personnel's levels of depression ($r = .672$, $n = 293$, $p = .000$), anxiety ($r = .594$, $n = 293$, $p = .000$), and stress ($r = .663$, $n = 293$, $p = .000$) are moderately strong correlated with their work-life balance.

Keywords: Work-life Balance, Depression, Anxiety, Stress

Introduction

The Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) serve as a fortress of national defence, tasked with safeguarding Malaysia against any external dangers emanating from the land, sea or air, while also providing support to public authority entities in addressing internal threats to the nation. In order to ensure perpetual accountability, particularly in the face of land threats, the Malaysian Army, or Army for short, must maintain a state of constant readiness and be readily deployable in accordance with the requirements of their responsibilities. As a consequence, the Army must complete military instruction.

In another profession, training can be a minor activity for which relatively little time is allocated. In the Army, training is very crucial. The aim of training in the Army is to prepare

land forces to defend the nation and its interests from external threats. Training for war takes the biggest portion of peacetime soldiering. When the soldier are not involved in any peacetime duties, they must train for war. Training must be conducted in way the Army is going to fight. In times of war, the Army will fight the way it is trained. No soldier will be deployed without proper training, and no soldier should be a casualty in war due to lack of training.

Training in the Army helps the soldier to achieve military discipline, health, strength and endurance as well as teamwork. Based on the training, the soldier has been instructed to do their responsibilities with discipline. The regimented training has established in the soldier a sense of professional obligation, which affects their work-life balance. Work-life balance involves a large array of family and personal interests. In the military, these intimate life experiences are rarely, if ever, acquired.

The responsibility held by the soldier makes them face difficulties in balancing their work and life needs thus affecting their mental health. According to Borowiec, A.A. & Drygass, W. (2023), previous study prove that people who are having conflict with work-life balance are reported to have problem with mental health well-being. They are having mental exhausted which make them stress, depresses as well as anxiety. They have a problem to sleep and hardly to have positive emotions. Lack of work-life balance can harm an individual's health. A study by Poulouse & Sudarsa (2017), report that in the Asian Region employees and employers face a high degree of stress due to inadequate work-life balance. According to Albrecht (2020) and Bakker et al (2005), low work-life balance also associated with adverse health outcomes such as serious depression and emotional weariness. A study conducted by Ministry of Education in 2017 revealed that 48,258 equivalent to 4.4% teachers in Malaysia having moderate stress (Nor Ain, 2018). Therefore, work-life balance is of the utmost importance for all employees, as it can have negative effects on their health

Significant of the Study

There are few study reported about the level of depression, anxiety and stress as well as work-life balance in the Malaysian Army. Therefore, this study intends to contribute to the lack of studies focusing on the issue related with depression, anxiety, stress and work-life balance. Studies about the work-life balance of employees have been done focusing on specific careers such as nurses Nurumal et al (2017), doctors Dousin et al (2019); Omar (2016), teachers Johari et al (2018), and bank sector employees (Suhaimi & Seman, 2019). Therefore, this study conducted targetting on a specific population which is army personnel who are working in the Army Headquarters, Ministry of Defence, Kuala Lumpur. This study will be able to provide an information about the level of work-life balance among military personnel in Malaysia. This study also provides an info about the level of depression, anxiety and stress among military personnel. This info can be used to provide insight to the counsellor in army organisation to plan and develop an effective treatment plans either intervention or prevention programs to reduce mental health issues among military personnel.

Problem Statement

National defence is carried out around the clock. As a result, finding a balance can be tough when the border between professional and personal lives is blurred. This situation makes the soldier's work-life balance between job responsibility, personal pursuit, and family obligation become uncertain. Thus, results in psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety as well

and stress, which effect on their mental health well-being. Table 1 show the total of psychiatric cases in Military Hospital which proven that Army personnel having more mental problem issue than navy and airforce personnel. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between work-life balance and mental health well-being among army personnel.

Table 1

Total of Psychiatric Cases in Military Hospital

HOSPITAL	ARMY	NAVY	AIRFORCE
94 HAT	116	2	4
96 HAT	218	222	56
HAT TM	787	103	214
HAT WKK	39	90	9
TOTAL	1,160	417	283

According to P, Donna (2018), soldiers are struggling to meet with the responsibilities as a military personnel and being a parent, partner and a child. The balance between work and personal lives are difficult to achieve because the soldier need to spend more time on their job which can cause stress among military members. Thus affect on their mental health well-being in the form of depression. Mental health well-being among soldier is crucial as it help them to sustain with their job and and help them to manage their stress.

Research Questions

The study conducted to answer questions as follows

1. What is the level of depression, anxiety and stress among military personnel?
2. What is the level of work-life balance among military personnel?
3. Is the level of work-life balance different between male and female?
4. Does depression level of military personnel correlate with level of work-life balance?
5. Does anxiety level of military personnel correlate with level of work-life balance?
6. Does stress level of military personnel correlate with level of work-life balance?

Research Objectives

The objective of the study as follows

1. To identify the level of depression, anxiety and stress among military personnel.
2. To identify the level of work-life balance among military personnel.
3. To identify the different level of work-life balance between male and female.
4. To identify the relationship between depression and work-life balance among military personnel.
5. To identify the relationship between anxiety and work-life balance among military personnel.
6. To identify the relationship between stress and work-life balance among military personnel.

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant different on the level of work-life balance between males and females.

2. There is a relationship between the level of work-life balance and the level of depression among military personnel.
3. There is a relationship between the level of work-life balance and the level of anxiety among military personnel.
4. There is a relationship between the level of work-life balance and the level of stress among military personnel.

Literature Review

Depression

Yang et al (2020) found that individuals who engage in prolonged periods of excessive work are more susceptible to developing depression. Several prior studies (Cheung & Yip (2016); Hirosaki et al (2009) have found that persons who struggle to balance their work and personal commitments are more likely to experience depression. Hirosaki et al (2009) argue that it is crucial for individuals to pause and reflect on their job, dedicating leisure time, as it positively impacts their mental well-being. In a military context, the study conducted by Moradi et al (2021) reveals the necessity of enhancing awareness and screening for mental health problems within the military community due to the significant occurrence of depression and suicidal thoughts or actions among military personnel. Conversely, a research conducted by Finnegan & Randles (2022) found that 38% of veterans had a code indicating the presence of a Common Mental Disorder (CMD) on their medical records. The most common illnesses were depression (17.8%), alcohol abuse (17.3%), and anxiety (15.0%).

Anxiety

Recent research undertaken by Carney et al (2005); Mounsey et al (2013) have discovered a detrimental correlation between anxiety and work-life balance among employed individuals. For example, a study conducted in six different countries discovered that individuals who were deeply ingrained in a culture that promotes gender equality had a more pronounced correlation between work-life balance and anxiety compared to those who were not (Harr et al., 2014). Larson et al.'s (2001) study suggests that individuals with a strong work-life balance are less prone to experiencing significant mental distress and anxiety. This is because they are more inclined to engage in activities that are not related to their work. Robert et al (2021) found that nurses working in respiratory clinical areas during the COVID-19 pandemic experience moderate to severe symptoms of anxiety and depression. However, their overall resilience levels were found to be moderate. Amidst the COVID-19 epidemic, there have been numerous reports of prevalent mental health issues, such as heightened levels of anxiety and indications of depression. As per Valladares-Garrido (2023), military troops engaged in the frontline battle against COVID-19 have encountered symptoms of anxiety and depression. The duration of their service on the front lines has been found to influence the occurrence of anxiety.

Stress

Several previous studies have established a correlation between work-life balance and mental health, specifically among working populations. Kotera (2019) establishes a correlation between work-life balance and depression, anxiety, and stress among construction workers. Choi & Kim (2019) investigate the association between work-life balance and mental health among bus drivers in Korea. Lee et al conduct a study on working individuals in general. Giauque et al (2016) argue that achieving a harmonious equilibrium between professional

and personal obligations is crucial for diminishing stress levels. Akanji et al (2020) demonstrated that extended working hours had an impact on the reported stress levels of female doctors practicing in Nigeria. They were incapable of meeting the usual obligations within their families, intensifying their feelings of grief and powerlessness. Moreover, as stated by Vojvodic et al (2017), stress in the military arises from perilous missions or tasks, conflicts with superiors and colleagues, insufficient rest due to rotational work schedules, the requirement to maintain physical fitness, separation from loved ones, and additional non-combat duties such as disaster relief, peacekeeping, and other humanitarian endeavours.

Work-Life Balance

According to Brough et al (2014), work-life balance refers to an individual's personal appraisal of the equilibrium between their work and non-work activities or general life. This concept relies on the individual's personal appraisal of their own work-life equilibrium. In addition, Sirgy & Lee (2018) noticed that establishing work-life balance entails reducing or eliminating conflicts between an individual's social responsibilities and their professional tasks. Sojka (2020) defines work-life balance as a situation when an individual's professional life does not impair their personal life, and their personal life stays completely functional. Puzi et al (2020) gave a definition of work-life balance as the ability of an individual to maintain a healthy balance between their work and other activities, in a way that is consistent with their personal life and encourages their advancement. The study conducted on Royal Malaysian Air Force personnel demonstrated a somewhat favourable association between emotion intelligence and work-life balance and a low negative relationship between Depression, Anxiety, Stress and work-life balance (Baker, R. et al, 2022). Hence, this study was done to ascertain the association between Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and work-life balance among military members.

Baker et al (2022) found that depression, anxiety, and stress detrimentally affect work-life balance. The study revealed a significant negative relationship between depression, anxiety, stress, and work-life balance. These findings suggest that there is a negative correlation between the levels of depression, anxiety, and stress and the degree of work-life balance. Furthermore, the document states that imbalanced work-life conditions are a contributing factor to heightened job-related stress, reduced efficiency, emotional depletion, and the development of weariness. These factors can result in conflicts and diminished pleasure in both professional and personal domains. Hence, it is apparent that depression, anxiety, and stress can profoundly impact an individual's capacity to effectively manage the equilibrium between their professional and personal spheres.

Moreover, depression, anxiety, and stress are considered significant indicators of mental health problems, as they can lead to adverse psychological outcomes if left untreated. This is because these situations can result in more unfavourable psychological effects (Teh et al., 2015). This study aims to assess the prevalence of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and stress, as shown in previous studies (Beiter et al., 2015; Gao et al., 2020; Mamun et al., 2020).

Conceptual Framework

According to the resource drain theory, the important resources that are limited are time and energy that are used up for work by Malaysian employees. This is because time and energy

are limited resources. According to Clinton et al (2017), long working hours have results in adverse effect on mental health well-being.

This study looks into this negative association between work and non-work domains as an individual's reluctance to participate in another domain due to responsibilities. As National defence is carried out around the clock. Finding a balance can be tough when the border between professional and personal lives is blurred. Thus, results in psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety as well as stress and burnout which affect their mental health well-being. This situation makes the soldier's work-life balance between job responsibility, personal pursuit and family obligation become uncertain.

Based on previous research, this study found that work-life balance is linked to and can contribute to mental health problems. Other studies have also reported a negative relationship between work-life balance and mental health issues such as depression Yang et al (2020), anxiety Mounsey et al (2013), and stress (Giauque et al., 2016). In military context, there are three level of war which is strategic level, operational level and tactical level. Previous study conducted to assesses the relationship between depression, anxiety and stress and work-life balance in tactical level. However, there is no research conduct to study the relationship between depression, anxiety and stress and work-life balance in strategic level.

This study came to the conclusion that depression, anxiety and stress among military personnel in Ministry of Defence is associated with work-life balance based on the findings of previous research that similarly reported a negative correlation between work-life balance and mental health problems such as depression Yang et al (2020), anxiety Mounsey et al (2013), and stress (Giauque et al., 2016).

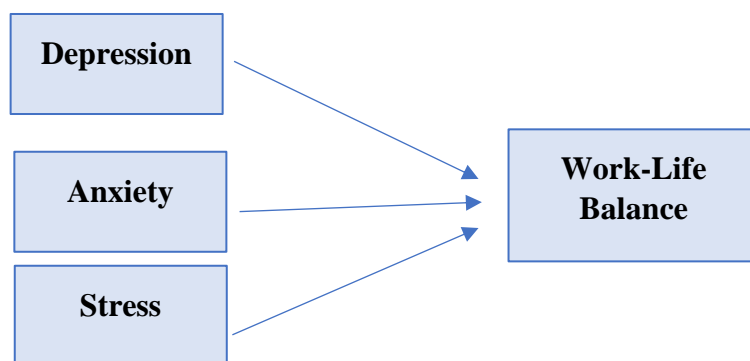


Figure 1: *Proposed Conceptual Framework Model*

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between depression, anxiety and stress with work-life balance among military personnel in the Ministry of Defence. In this approach, the researcher takes measurements of both independent variables and dependent variables (IV: depression, anxiety and stress, DV: work-life balance) and analyses the data to determine the relationship between them. This quantitative research method are based on objective measurements and statistical analysis or the collection of numbers. Questionnaires are used to get information. The method works

best for this study because it helped me figure out how a dependent variable and an independent variable are related.

The goal of the study was to find out if there was a correlation between having a good balance between work and life and having good mental health among military personnel. Therefore, researcher have chosen correlation study to determines whether there is a significant relationship between variables (Chua, 2021). Using correlation study, researcher identified the correlation between variables without showcase the cause and effect relationship between the variables.

Pearson correlation was used in the study to measure the correlation linear between variables. There are mostly three different kinds of correlational research:

- a. **Positive correlation:** When an increase in one variable causes an increase in the other variable, this is a positive relationship between the two variables. When one variable goes down, the other variable also goes down.
- b. **Negative correlation:** A negative correlation is the exact opposite of a positive relationship. If one variable goes up, then the other variable will go down, and vice versa.
- c. **No correlation:** In this third type, there is no connection between the two variables. If you change one variable, you might not see a change in the other variable.

Location

The study conducted in the Ministry of Defence Malaysia. In overall, the respondent for the survey is military personnel who are currently serving in Army Headquarters.

Population and Sampling

The use of a quantitative approach made it possible for a greater number of respondents to take part in the study. It also made it possible to collect a greater number of replies from members of the armed forces. There were around 1,225 personnel served at Army Headquarters. In order to determine the appropriate sample size for the required degree of precision, researcher used Cochran's formula for sample size. According to Cochran (1977), a total of 293 people were estimated to be necessary for adequate statistical analysis for this study.

Research Instrumentation

Questionnaires was used in this study to collect the data which consists of three sections and utilises two instruments. Section A pertains to the collection of demographic information, Section B focuses on the assessment of work-life balance using the Work-Life Balance Scale, and Section C involves the evaluation of mental health using the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale 21 (DASS-21).

Work-Life Balance Scale

The assessment of work-life balance was carried out using a 15-item scale that was revised by Hayman (2005) based on the original scale created by (Fisher, 2001). This more broad method

is advantageous for organisations to assess the non-professional side of employees, as the notion of family may not be relevant to all employees. Furthermore, this scale also evaluates the positive transfer or enhancement (Hayman, 2005). The scale consisted of 15 items that were particularly designed to assess three dimensions of work-life balance: work interference with personal life (WIPL-7 items), personal life interference with work (PLIW-4 things), and work/personal life enhancement (WPLE-4 items). The primary measure, work interference with personal life (WIPL), quantifies the extent to which work affects an individual's personal life. The second component, known as personal life interference with work (PLIW), quantifies the degree to which an individual's personal life disrupts their work responsibilities. The third dimension, referred to as work/personal life enhancement (WPLE), quantifies the extent to which an individual's personal life positively impacts their job.

The total work-life balance score was derived by aggregating the scores of the three dimensions. The results of a higher order factor analysis demonstrated that the three dimensions were indicative of a single underlying construct, as supported by empirical evidence (Fisher-McAuley, et al., 2003). The reliability of the scale was assessed using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The predicted reliability coefficients were .91 for WIPL, .82 for PLIW, and .67 for WPLE. The reliability of the scale was assessed under Indian conditions, and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was determined to be .87.

DASS 21

The DASS-21, often known as the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale 21, is a psychological assessment tool. The DASS-21 is a self-administered questionnaire used to evaluate levels of depression, anxiety, and stress (Zanon et al., 2020). The respondent will assign a rating of "Normal," "Mild," "Moderate," "Severe," or "Extremely Severe" to each of the three unpleasant states of mind at the conclusion of the test. Research has indicated that those who are mentally well as well as those who are clinically disturbed both encounter feelings of despair, worry, and tension. However, the key difference rests primarily in the degree or strength of these emotions.

When doing research, it's important to make sure that the results are valid and reliable. Validity is how well an instrument does what it is supposed to do and how well it measures what it is thought to measure. In accordance with Moya's (2022) research, the DASS-21 exhibited high levels of internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) and high levels of internal reliability for all of its sub-scales (as measured by their ordinal alphas). In terms of criterion validation, the DASS-21 performed admirably in differentiating between cases and controls.

Data Collection Procedure

Research will begin with the creation of online surveys. The survey link was then shared via Google Form with Army Headquarters staff. Before beginning the questionnaire, participants were asked to read the accompanying informed consent, which included details like the study's goals and length, whether or not their participation was needed, and whether or not their answers would be kept private. Individuals who participated were offered the opportunity to stop participating without penalty. SPSS was then used to evaluate the data received from the questionnaires.

Data Analyses

In this section, I will go over the data, both descriptive and inferential, that was used to investigate the research issue. After being placed in an Excel file, the data were then transferred into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). In order to present the facts, researcher used Pearson's correlation analysis to identified the relationship between a depression, anxiety, stress and work-life balance. In this particular study, an examination of both ordinal data and responses to Likert scale questions was carried out.

Result of Pilot Study

A pilot research was undertaken on a sample of 30 military personnel employed by the Ministry of Defence. The pilot study aims to evaluate the instrument's reliability by determining the Cronbach's Alpha. The pilot study determined that the work-life scale has a reliability of 0.87, as measured by the Cronbach alpha coefficient. This value exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.70, as established by (Nunnally, 1978). Hence, this questionnaire is applicable for this investigation. The reliability of the DASS-21 scale, as assessed by the Cronbach alpha value, was 0.97, above the minimum threshold of 0.70 as recommended by Nunnally (1978). Hence, this questionnaire is applicable for this investigation.

Findings

Total of 293 army personnel are chosen in this study which 182 respondents were male and 111 were female. Respondent age between 18 - 28 were 91 respondents, 29-39 were 153 respondents, 40 - 49 were 39 respondents and 50 onwards were 10 respondents. Majority of the respondents are married (185 respondents), followed by 94 respondents were single and 14 respondents were divorce. The data also collected according to the rank. 94 respondents were Kapt/Lt/Lt M, followed by 73 respondents were Kpl/LKpl/Pbt, 55 respondents were Mej, 32 respondents were SSjn/Sjn, 21 respondents were PW I/PW II and 18 respondents were Lt Kol onwards.

Table 2

Demographic Responds

Demography		Frequency 293n	(f)	=	Percentage %
Gender	Male	182			62.1
	Female	111			37.9
Age	18-28	91			31.1
	29-39	153			52.2
	40-49	39			13.3
	50>>	10			3.4
Marriage Status	Single	94			32
	Married	185			63.2
	Others	14			4.8
Rank	Kpl/LKpl/Pbt	73			24.9
	SSjn/Sjn	32			10.9
	PW I/PW II	21			7.2
	Kapt/Lt/Lt M	94			32.1
	Mej	55			18.8
	Lt Kol onwards	18			6.1

This research divided the finding into two which is descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis are used to answer the RQ 1 and RQ 2. Inferential analysis are used to answer H1, H2, H3 and H4.

Descriptive Analysis

RQ 1: What is the level of depression, anxiety and stress among military personnel?

According to Lovibond & Lovibond (1995), the level of depression, anxiety and stress are divided into five category which is normal, mild, moderate, severe and extremely severe. Table 2 show the scoring guide used to identified the level of depression, anxiety and stress. Based on the SPSS analysis, 23.9% military personnel have depression from moderate, severe and extremely severe, 39.7% military personnel have anxiety from moderate, severe and extremely severe and 22.9% military personnel have stress from moderate, severe and extremely. In overall, the mean level of depression is 5.34 while anxiety is 5.44 and stress is 5.99. Thus, show that the level of depression is mild while the level of anxiety is moderate and the level of stress among military personnel is normal.

Table 3

The Scoring Guide Used to Identified The Level of Depression, Anxiety and Stress

DASS-21 SCORING	DEPRESSION	ANXIETY	STRESS
Normal	0-5	0-4	0-7
Mild	6-7	5-6	8-9
Moderate	8-10	7-8	10-13
Severe	11-14	9-10	14-17
Extremely Severe	15+	11+	18+

RQ 2: What is the level of work-life balance among military personnel?

The dimensions of WIPL and PLIW were scored using a scale of 0, 1, 2, and 3, based on the instrument employed in this study. A high score implies that personnel have encountered the situations described in the question more frequently, which suggests a lower level of work-life balance. The scoring for the WPLE dimension varied from 3 to 0, with each value indicating a distinct frequency of occurrence. A high score signifies a significant level of perceived work-life balance. According to the SPSS study, the average value for WIPL is 1.35, the average value for PLIW is 0.80, and the average value for WPLE is 1.51. The average work-life balance score for military members is 1.25.

Inferential Analysis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant different on the level of work-life balance between males and females

From the SPSS analysis, the significant value for Lavene’s test is .663 (larger than 0.5), thus, equal variances assumed should utilize in the findings. By referring tot he T-test for equility means the sig. (2-tailed) value is .735. As this value is above the required cut-off of 0.5, this indicates there is no significannt difference on the level of work-life balance between the gender. The mean difference between the two groups is shown below, along with the 95% confidence interval of the difference showing the lower value and upper value. Thus, the hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Table 4

T-test Results

		Lavene's Test for Aquality of Variances		t-test for Equility of Means						
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Work-Life Balance	Equal variances assumed	0.191	0.663	0.339	291	0.735	0.01838	0.05428	-0.08844	0.1252
	Equal variances not assumed			0.337	229.688	0.736	0.01838	0.05448	-0.08897	0.12573

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between the level of work-life balance and the level of depression among military personnel

The relationship between between the level of work-life balance and the level of depression among military personnel is examined using Pearson Correlation. The result show, there is a moderately strong relation between the level of work-life balance and the level of depression among military personnel where $r = .672$, $n = 293$, $p = .000$. Thus, the hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Table 5

Correlation of Work-Life Balance and Depression

	Correlation	Work-Life Balance	Depression
Work-Life Balance	Pearson	1	.672**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	293	293
Depression	Pearson	.672**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	293	293

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between the level of work-life balance and the level of anxiety among military personnel

The relationship between between the level of work-life balance and the level of anxiety among military personnel is examined using Pearson Correlation. The result show, there is a moderately strong relation between the level of work-life balance and the level of anxiety among military personnel where $r = .594$, $n = 293$, $p = .000$. Thus, the hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Table 6

Correlation of Work-Life Balance and Anxiety

	Correlation	Work-Life Balance	Anxiety
Work-Life Balance	Pearson	1	.594**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	293	293
Anxiety	Pearson	.594**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	293	293

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between the level of work-life balance and the level of stress among military personnel

The relationship between between the level of work-life balance and the level of stress among military personnel is examined using Pearson Correlation. The result show, there is a moderately strong relation between the level of work-life balance and the level of stress among military personnel where $r = .663$, $n = 293$, $p = .000$. Thus, the hypothesis 4 is accepted.

Table 7

Correlation of Work-Life Balance and Stress

	Correlation	Work-Life Balance	Stress
Work-Life Balance	Pearson	1	.663**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	293	293
Stress	Pearson	.663**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	293	293

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

Discussions

The finding show that the percentage for level of anxiety among military personnel is quite high compare to depression and stress. Mark and Smith (2008) believe that an individual's level of anxiety is increased by excessive work demands and tasks. In the military domain, military personnel experience unpredictable work demands. One of the primary factors that might lead to increased anxiety among individuals is the excessive commitment demanded from them, which includes continual an extra work and sacrificing their time with the family. This concern is likely to exist because if members fail to complete the tasks they receive, this will invite disciplinary action or affect their level of achievement. Poor performances can lead to a decrease in motivation, resulting in a lack of opportunities for career progression and the loss of various benefits. Moreover, this unwavering demand on an excessive level of involvement results in military personnel having limited opportunities for spending time with their families, so potentially giving rise to familial conflicts, especially for those who are married.

The study also show that army personnel do experiencing a conflict to balance between work and personal life. According to Bray et al (2010), military personnel reported to have high

level of stress in their work compare to their family life. Thus, show that army's work do interference with personal life. However, according to Ohlsson (2001), increased understanding of adaptive behavior and skills in high-level military staff work, shedding light on the strategies and skills used by leaders to navigate the complexities of collaborative environments and organizational demands. Eventhough, army personnel need to work extra hour, they can still perform their duties perfectly due to the feeling of respect for the superior officers. In addition, the spirit of loyalty and cooperation instilled in military training also helped the soldiers to some extent to adapt to the uncertain task conditions. However, according to Hassan (2017), the lack of work-life balance among military personnel can affect other members of the military's family.

The first hypothesis is analyze using T-test and reported there is no significant difference on the level of work-life balance between males and females. The findings also show that there is a moderately strong relationship between the level of depression, anxiety and stress with the level of work-life balance among military personnel. This highlights the necessity for targeted support and intervention for military personnel as they grow in their professional careers. Untreated mental health issues can lead to significant distress among military personnel, which in turn can have a detrimental impact on their overall well-being and job performance. This includes a decrease in personal integrity, increased likelihood of substance abuse, diminished capacity for empathy, instability in relationships, lack of self-confidence, and thoughts of suicide. Based on the study conduct by Hamid & Bolong (2015), suicides by Malaysian military members are rare and were first noticed in the early 1970s. In between of 2000 and 2012, there were 49 cases of military suicides, 24 of which were deaths and 25 of which were attempts. Moreover, the finding of lower satisfaction levels in the environmental category highlights the significance of addressing environmental problems that can influence the well-being of military personnel. The study demonstrates that implementing techniques targeting decreasing levels of depression, anxiety, stress and increase of quality of life, particularly those related to environmental elements, might provide a beneficial impact on the well-being of military personnel.

Mental health wellbeing also can be improved by having a good support system. Fareh et al (2023), reported that students with a strong support system are more likely to have higher levels of self-motivation and better mental health because they are able to share their problems that help them find alternatives to face the challenges they encounter. The support from family and friends provides emotional, psychological, and social well-being, which can contribute to higher self-motivation levels. This support can help reduce stress and anxiety, which are common mental health issues faced by students, and can ultimately have a positive impact on their academic achievement. Besides that, the study also show that students who engage in social activities and have strong social relationships are more likely to have a higher level of self-motivation and a better sense of well-being. Dunne et al (2021), reported that mental well-being can be improve through population-level physical activity initiatives. According to the study, 75% of those with a mental health condition agreed that parkrun has helped them manage their condition. In summary, the support system, including family support and social relationships, is crucial in influencing mental health and motivation. This highlights the importance of fostering a supportive environment to help maintain good mental health and high levels of motivation.

Conclusions

This study provided useful information about the relationship between stress, anxiety, depression, and work-life balance among military personnel, shedding light on their psychological well-being. The researchers' findings indicate a moderate strong positive correlation between stress, anxiety, and depression, and work-life balance in military people. Although working in stress situation is commonly experienced in the military setting, failure to manage it and address the underlying causes that can lead to mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression can significantly impair the performance of military personnel and tarnish the reputation of the Malaysian Army. Regarding this matter, it is necessary to enhance the programmes and evaluate the health status of the members in order to promote a substantial enhancement in the overall psychological well-being of the Royal Malaysian Army. This programme aims to assist members in reducing the symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression, while improving their ability to efficiently and effectively perform their tasks.

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